

## **Archer Mathieson Research Series:** The Fight for Talent

Within the current level of economic uncertainty, never has the need to attract and retain the best employees been stronger. Professionals who can steer a path through these troubled times will be much sought after.

This latest survey in the Archer Mathieson research series examines how well equipped organisations are to attract top talent to their businesses. We compare the thoughts of employers with those of the people they are trying to attract to reveal some interesting discrepancies and opportunities.

James Aston who heads up Archer Mathieson's HR practice responded to the survey by saying:

'We know that organisations will be finding recruiting even more difficult just in the few weeks since we ran our survey. With businesses working harder at keeping their key people, an experienced, well networked recruitment partner can unlock the door to the valuable individuals needed to steer a route through a downturn'.

'Businesses should also consider the benefits an experienced interim manager can bring at this time particularly in businesses transformation and restructuring'.

## Background

The survey was distributed to professionals within organisations of varying sizes and sectors throughout the Thames Valley and South East. Over 240 responses were recorded on behalf of these businesses.

To provide a rounded view, a second questionnaire was targeted at prospective employees who form part of the current and future talent pool available to this market. Over 70 professionals responded to this part of the survey.

## Highlights

### > It's tougher at the top:

Whilst organisations may be experiencing little problem filling lower level positions, the reverse is true of senior positions.

With increases in interim management, the allure of international opportunities and the determination of some organisations to hold onto their best people, over 80% of employers are finding it a challenge to recruit senior professionals.

### > Money...& culture... & job content... & chemistry...make the world go round:

Employees are taking a holistic approach to the relative merits a prospective employer may have to offer often weighing up a number of variables including cultural fit, role fit and personality fit alongside the remuneration package.

### > Poor employer branding:

Whilst prospective employees may be taking a holistic approach to the relative merits of an organisation, prospective employers may not. Powerful employer brands generally get the best employees, others may miss out. 30% of respondents felt their employer brand was weak and affected their ability to attract the best talent.

## Survey Findings

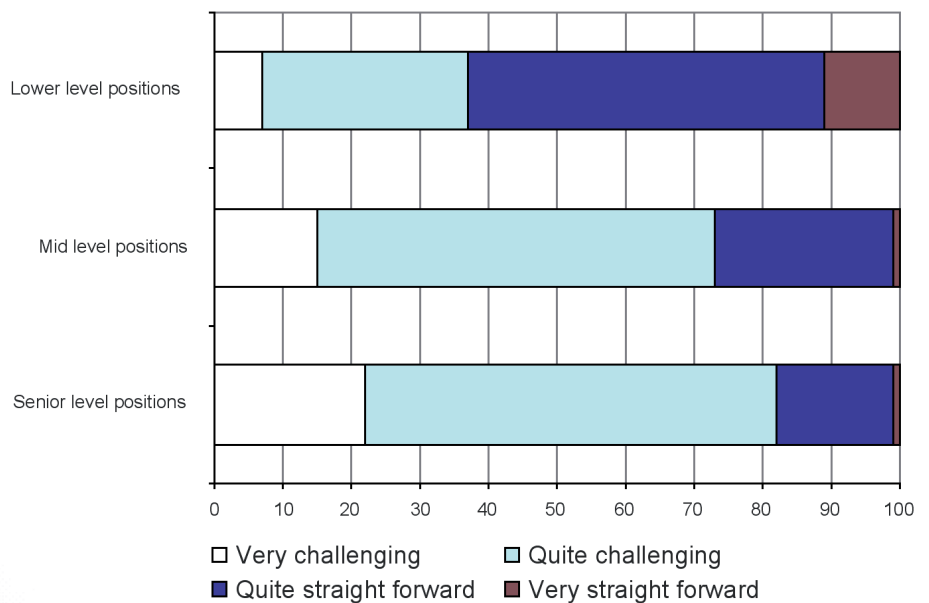
### Recruiting climate

> Recruiting top talent is becoming increasingly difficult. 22% of employer respondents are finding it 'very challenging' to recruit senior positions in their organisation with a further 60% experiencing quite challenging conditions.

> Whilst the situation eases at lower levels, recruitment conditions continue to be tough for mid level positions.

## Employers: Level of difficulty experienced in current recruiting (%)

Base: employer file



## Attracting new talent:

> From a list of 9 options both employer and candidate respondents cited the top 5 requirements for attracting new employees as:

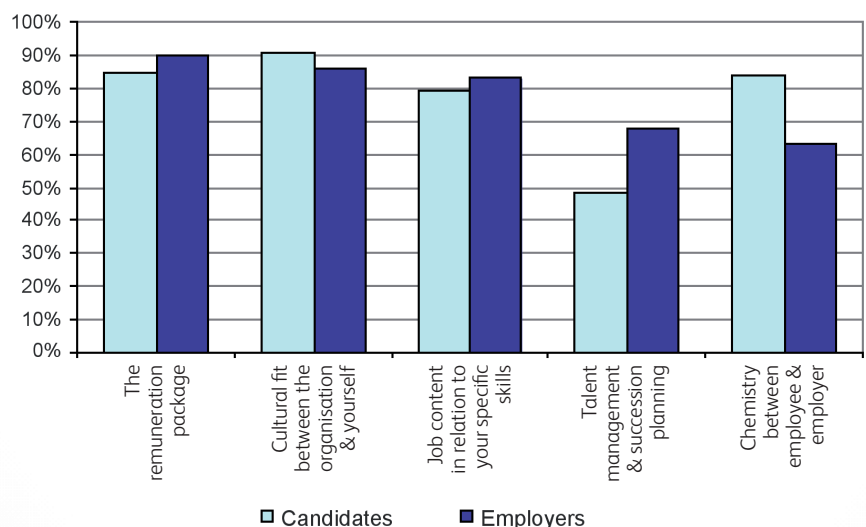
- Remuneration
- Culture fit
- Job content
- Talent management
- Chemistry

> Whilst responses between employers and candidates were largely matched, employers may be underestimating the importance a candidate may be placing on the relationship and chemistry between an employer and employee.

> The remuneration package is clearly evaluated alongside a number of other factors rather than in isolation. Cultural fit and job content in relation to an individuals skills occupied the top slot in our top 5 ranking more often than the remuneration package.

## Five most important criteria for securing new employees\*

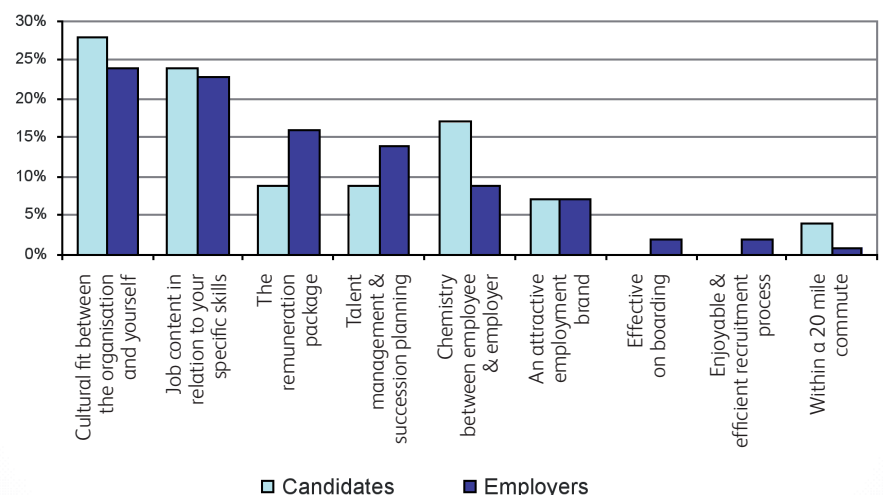
Base: whole file



\*Cumulative % ranking a criteria in any of the top 5 places

## Most important criteria for securing new employees\*

Base: whole file



\*% ranking a criteria as the most important (i.e. 1st)

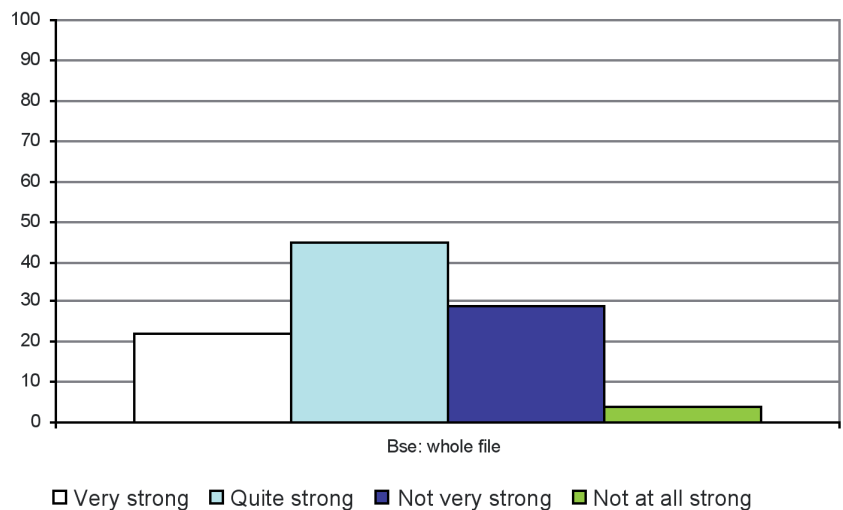
## Employer brands & the recruitment process

> 30% of employers feel there is a mismatch between the internal and external view of their brand with an equal number seeing their employer brand as 'not very strong'.

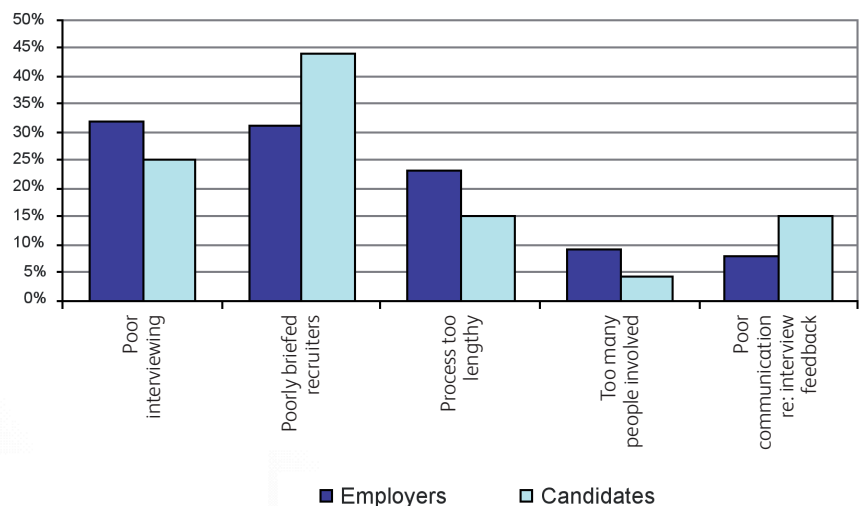
> This may account in part (along with the recruitment process) for candidates views on a brand pre and post appointment. Over 30% of respondents felt their experience of a brand fell below the expectations they had prior to joining.

> Poor briefing of those involved in the recruitment process along with poor interviewing are seen as the most detrimental pitfalls in the recruitment process. Despite this, only 50% of organisations provided structured interview training to those involved in the interview process.

Employers: How strong do you consider your employer brand to be? (%)  
Base: employer file



Most detrimental pitfalls when recruiting new employees\*  
Base: whole file



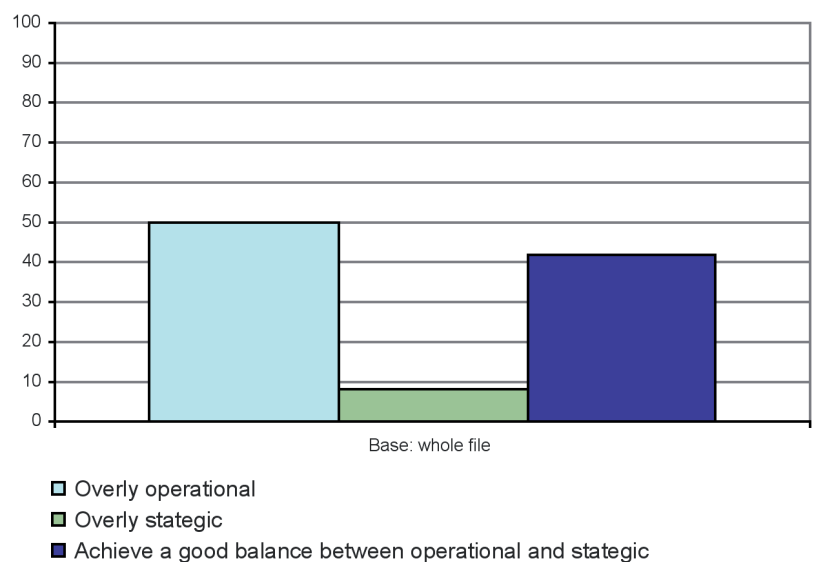
\*% ranking a pitfall as the most detrimental (i.e. no. 1)

### Food for thought: matching business needs with available skills

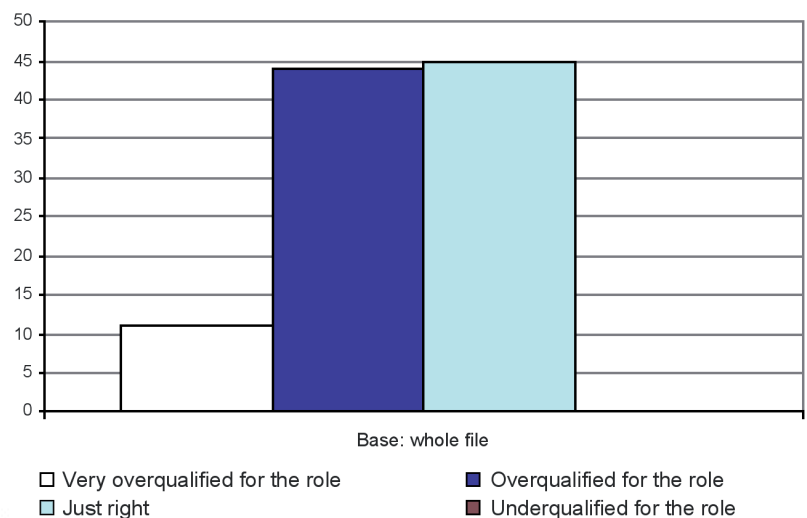
> With tough economic prospects ahead employers are increasingly looking for strong strategic skills from their teams. We know too the importance of job content in relation to individual skills for candidates.

Despite this, 55% of candidates felt over qualified for their roles and yet 50% of employers saw their new hires as overly operational. Available skills may be underused.

Employer: How well do you feel your mid to senior level hires achieve the balance between operational delivery and strategic input? (%)  
Base: employer file



Candidate: How well do you consider the skills and experience you have match those required of you in your current or previous role? (%)  
Base: candidate file



Archer Mathieson work in partnership with our clients and candidates to deliver effective recruitment solutions for some of the most challenging leadership positions across our specialist disciplines.

Our clients are among the most familiar names in business and our ability to provide the highest standard of interim management and executive recruitment services has gained us an enviable reputation. Our consultants are specialists in the key functions of finance, human resources and procurement & supply chain and their knowledge has been honed through years of experience.

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